

CORY V. MCCRAY
Legislative District 45
Baltimore City

Budget and Taxation Committee

Capital Budget Subcommittee
Health and Human Services Subcommittee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Vote Yes on Senate Bill SB: 363

Bill Title: Courts—Improperly Summoning a Police Officer – Civil Liability

Hearing Date: February 9, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

Chair: Will Smith and members of the committee:

I write to you today in **support** of **Senate Bill SB: 363**. This bill is important because it would authorize a citizen to bring civil action for damages against another person who knowingly calls the police with the intent to infringe on someone's civil liberties (i.e. discriminate against them, make them feel harassed/threatened, damage their standing in the community or their economic interests). If passed, it would allow for a person to sue for up to \$10,000 for economic damages and emotional distress.

The purpose of the bill would be to discourage racially biased 911 calls where the police are weaponized against people of color. In January 2020, a black man in Michigan named Sauntore Thomas had 911 called on him in a bank while attempting to cash a check that he received in a discrimination lawsuit. In May 2018, in an incident commonly referred to as the "BBQ Becky" incident, a white woman in Oakland called 911 on a black family barbecuing in a park. In October 2018, a white woman in St. Louis called 911 on and obstructed a black man from entering his own apartment building despite the fact that he had a key to the building. In July 2018, Oregon State Rep. Janelle Bynum had 911 called on her while canvassing in her own legislative district. This incident prompted the Oregon State Senate to pass similar legislation in 2019. These are just a few examples of the many instances across this country, where the police have been improperly summoned against people of color.

In order to protect both our citizens and our police departments throughout the state of Maryland, we hope that you will move for a **favorable** report of **Senate Bill: 363**.

Respectfully,

Cory V. McCray
State Senator